

Emergency Preparedness Captain's Guide

A Neighbor-Helping-Neighbor Approach

1. Introduction to Our Emergency Preparedness Group Model

Our Mission:

To protect and preserve lives by ensuring that every household is connected to a small, local support network during severe weather events such as tropical storms, tornadoes, floods, and hurricanes.

The Captain's Role:

- Lead your assigned group (6–13 households).
- Serve as the communication bridge between households and the larger Church leadership team.
- Promote a neighbor-helping-neighbor culture where your group includes Church members and their immediate neighbors when possible.

Key Principles:

- Local first: Help those physically closest to you before traveling farther.
- Communication is critical: Timely, accurate updates save lives.
- Preparedness is ongoing: The time to prepare is before a storm is in the forecast.

2. Preparing for a Storm

Pre-Season (November-May):

- Make sure all households have completed the Emergency Preparedness Checklist.
- Encourage families to store water, food, medication, and key supplies.
- Review evacuation routes and nearest shelter locations with households.
- Identify anyone who may need special assistance (elderly, disabled, medically dependent).

When a Storm Threatens:

- Contact each household to confirm they are aware of the situation.
- Encourage securing of outdoor items, stocking supplies, and fueling vehicles.
- Share the official sources for local weather and emergency updates.
- Remind households to charge phones and backup batteries.

3. Communication Best Practices Before, During, and After a Weather Event

Before:

- Use your preferred group communication method (group text, email, church messaging app).
- Send short, clear reminders — avoid long messages that delay urgent action.
- Keep records of who you've contacted and who still needs follow-up.

During:

- Prioritize safety over contact — only check in if it is safe to do so.
- Monitor updates from official sources (county emergency management, National Weather Service).
- Relay any critical instructions from Church leadership or local authorities.

After:

- Account for each household's safety status as soon as possible.
- Use the group's agreed-upon status check method (e.g., "I'm OK" text or porch sign).
- Provide information required to complete "needs service" tickets if outside help is needed
- Report the group's overall status to your assigned Church contact.

4. General Evacuation Order

Public Position:

We never question a government-issued evacuation order. Your role is to help households comply safely.

When an Order is Issued:

- Confirm every household is aware of the order.
- Ensure they know their evacuation route and destination.
- Remind them to take pets, important documents, and critical supplies.
- Assist those without transportation by connecting them to resources.

If Someone Refuses to Evacuate:

- Respect their decision but document the refusal and inform Church leadership.
- Encourage them to reconsider and provide the potential risks.

5. Major Damage to a Home

First Priority:

- Ensure all occupants are safe and accounted for.
- If injured, call 911 immediately before contacting anyone else.

Immediate Actions for the Captain:

- Notify Church leadership of the situation.
- Help arrange temporary shelter if needed.
- Complete information for service ticket (services include assisting with securing the property (tarps, boarding up, clearing down branches or trees, etc.) if safe to do so.

Follow-Up:

- Encourage the household to contact their insurance provider promptly.
- Connect them with local aid programs (FEMA, Red Cross, Church welfare resources).
- Keep in regular contact until the household is stabilized.

Captain's Quick Reference

1. Stay informed. Follow official sources — don't spread unverified information.
2. Stay connected. Check in with households regularly, especially before/after events.
3. Stay safe. Your safety allows you to continue helping others.
4. Document everything. Names, contact attempts, needs, and assistance provided.